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The New Indian Express Wishes its readers a

Our offices and press will remain closed today and there will be no issue of the paper on Wednesday

COMBINED M-CAP OF BSE-LISTED COMPANIES HITS ₹400 LAKH CRORE

The market capitalisation of BSE-listed firms reached all-time closing high of ₹400.86 lakh crore on Monday amid a record rally in equities

RECORDS 300% GROWTH IN A DECADE

The combined market cap of BSE-listed companies zoomed 300% since March 2014 when it first crossed the ₹100 crore milestone. The ₹200 lakh crore mark was first touched in February 2021 and ₹300 lakh crore in July 2023—a mere nine months ago. During Monday's trade, the 30-share BSE Sensex jumped 0.67% to settle at 74,742.50—up 3.4% year-to-date | **P16**

INVESTORS BETTING ON Q4 GROWTH HOPES

- The unprecedented bull run in Indian equities comes amid rising retail participation as shown by sharp surge in the number of demat account holders from 36 million in 2019 to 151 million in 2023
- "Investors are betting big on Indian stocks on expectations of a strong growth momentum," Prashanth Tapse of Mehta Equities said

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STOCKS HIT THEIR 52-WEEK HIGH ON THE BOMBAY STOCK EXCHANGE ON MONDAY

CHENNAI • MADURAI • VIJAYAWADA • BENGALURU • KOCHI • HYDERABAD • VISAKHAPATNAM • COIMBATORE • KOZHIKODE • THIRUVANANTHAPURAM • BELAGAVI • BHUBANESWAR • SHIVAMOGGA • MANGALURU • TIRUPATI • TIRUCHY • TIRUNELVELI • SAMBALPUR • HUBBALLI • DHARMAPURI • KOTTAYAM • KANNUR • VILLUPURAM • KOLLAM • TADEPALLIGUDEM • NAGAPATTINAM • THRISSUR • KALABURAGI

Court rejects interim bail to Kavitha in excise scam

Says prima facie material shows her involvement in alleged offence

SUCHITRA KALYAN MOHANTY @ New Delhi

IN a setback to BRS leader K Kavitha, a Delhi court on Monday denied her interim bail in the Delhi excise policy case. Rejecting the bail plea, special Judge Kaveri Baweja said the material presented by the Enforcement Directorate prima facie shows the Telangana politician is actively involved in the alleged money laundering offence, destruction of evidence, and attempting to influence witnesses in the case.

Kavitha, the daughter of former Telangana CM K Chandrashekar Rao, had sought interim bail saying her 16-year-old son has exams and needs her 'moral and emotional support'. The judge said there was no apparent reason why close relatives can't provide moral support to the child, rejecting the argument that they can't be a substitute for the mother to address the exam-related anxiety of the ward.

K Kavitha

The court also noted that Kavitha, 46, can by no standards be considered a 'vulnerable' woman who could be made a scapegoat for committing the alleged offences, adding there is no compelling reason to grant her interim relief at this stage.

Kavitha was arrested by the ED on March 15 and remanded in the probe agency's custody till March 23, which was subsequently extended. Since March 26, she has been in judicial custody. According to the ED, she is part of the 'South Group' lobby, which allegedly paid ₹100 crore as kickbacks to AAP leaders in return for a big share of Delhi liquor licences.

AAP cries foul as ED grills MLA, Kejri aide

UJWAL JALALI @ New Delhi

THE Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday questioned Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's personal assistant Bibhav Kumar and Aam Aadmi Party legislator Durgesh Pathak in connection with the money laundering probe in Delhi excise policy case, evoking a sharp reaction from AAP that the BJP wants to stop it from campaigning in the Lok Sabha polls.

Durgesh Pathak

Sources said Kumar was questioned to seek some clarifications on some documents in the excise probe, while Pathak was called in connection with the party's 2021-22 poll campaign for the Goa assembly polls. Pathak was the AAP's in-charge for Goa elections. According to the ED, ₹45 crore from criminal activities were utilised in the electoral campaign of the AAP for Goa.

The probe agency had in its earlier chargesheets alleged that at least 36 accused, including former deputy CM Manish Sisodia and Bibhav Kumar, had destroyed, used or changed 170 phones to conceal evidence of 'kickbacks' worth thousands of crores in the alleged scam.

According to the ED, Bibhav's mobile phone IMEI number had been changed four times between September 2021 and July 2022.

SC ON K'TAKA PLEA: LET THERE NOT BE UNION-STATE CONTEST

AGENCIES @ New Delhi

LET there not be a "contest" between the Union and the state, the Supreme Court said on Monday while hearing the Karnataka government's plea, seeking its direction to the Centre to release financial aid to it for drought management.

A bench of justices BR Gavai and Sandeep Mehta was told by Attorney General R Venkataramani and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who appeared for the Centre, that they would seek instructions in the matter. The court initially asked the Centre to file a response to Karnataka's plea.

Urging the court to take up the matter after two weeks, the solicitor general said they would take instructions in the matter. Mehta said instead of filing the petition in the top court, if somebody would have spoken to the authorities on the issue, it could have been resolved.

"We have seen various state governments are required to approach the court," the bench observed. Mehta said, "I don't wish to say why, but this is a growing tendency." The bench noted that the top law officers, who have appeared on advance notice, have stated that they would make a statement on the next date. It posted the matter for hearing after two weeks.

OUR FIGHT WILL CONTINUE: SIDDU

Bengaluru: Chief Minister Siddaramaiah on Monday accused the Centre of attempting to mislead the Supreme Court by placing false information before it. "Our fight against the injustice will continue not only on the streets, but also in the court." | **P8**

BJP worker dies in freak accident during Shobha's B'luru campaign

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

IN a freak accident, a 62-year-old BJP worker died on Monday in KR Puram traffic police limits during the election campaign of Bengaluru North BJP candidate Shobha Karandlaje.

The victim, who was riding a motorcycle, was run over by a bus after he crashed into the door of a sports utility vehicle (SUV) used by Karandlaje and fell on the road. The victim has been identified as Prakash, a resident of TC Palya. The accident took place around 12.10pm near Ganesh Temple on Devasandra main road. Prakash was following her convoy when he crashed into the car door that was opened suddenly.

SECURITY BREACH AT SIDDU'S RALLY

Bengaluru: A man carrying a gun in a holster garlanded Chief Minister Siddaramaiah while the latter was campaigning near Jayanagar on Monday. In videos that went viral on social media, the man gets on top of the open vehicle and garlands the CM | **P7**

The Union minister told reporters that the SUV was parked on the roadside and Prakash fell after crashing into the door that was opened. "I was campaigning in the area after parking the SUV. Prakash was our dedicated worker," she said. Prakash was shifted to a nearby hospital in an autorickshaw, where he was declared brought dead.

Meanwhile, Congress leaders criticised Karandlaje for not arranging an ambulance to shift Prakash to hospital and instead continuing her campaign.

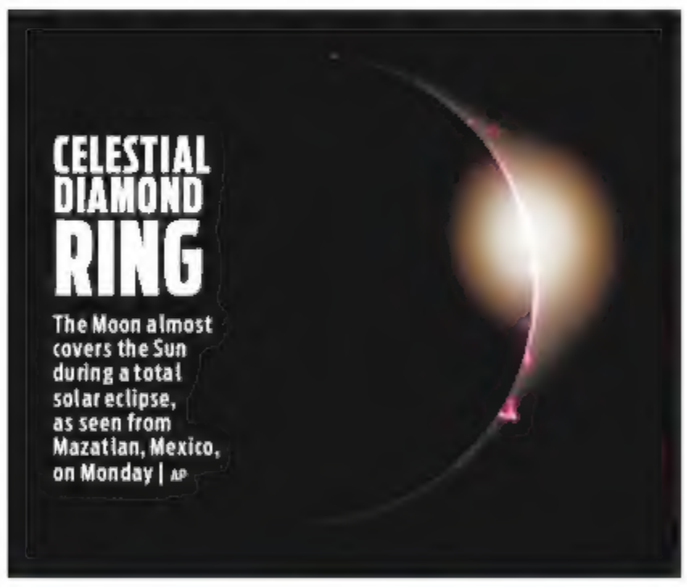
EXPRESS READ

SC asks Google how location-sharing works

New Delhi: The Supreme Court on Monday directed Google to explain how its PIN location-sharing on its map works. The court said it would examine later whether sharing location as a pre-condition of bail would violate an accused's right to privacy | **PTI**

Srinivas Pallia new CEO, MD of Wipro

Bengaluru: Thierry Delaporte has resigned as Wipro CEO and MD after serving the company for nearly four years. The IT major has appointed Srinivas Pallia as CEO and MD. He will be based in New Jersey.



The Moon almost covers the Sun during a total solar eclipse, as seen from Mazatlan, Mexico, on Monday | AP

BIBI SAYS DATE FIXED TO INVADE RAFAH

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Monday escalated his pledge to invade southern Gaza's, saying, 'There is a date'. He said Rafah operation is essential for Israel's victory over Hamas

Five cops among 20 hurt in Ballari clash

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Ballari

MORE than 20 people, including five policemen, were admitted to hospital after a clash between two communities over construction of a temple at Kolagallu village in Ballari district on Sunday evening.

Twenty-four people were arrested in connection with the clash. Prohibitory orders under Section 144 were imposed at Kolagallu after the incident.

According to sources, a scuffle broke out between members of the two communities when some of them tried to install an idol at Yeriyappatatta temple. It turned ugly when the members indulged in stone throwing.

The rift over construction of the temple reached the Dharwad Bench of the Karnataka HIgh Court when some villagers filed a petition last month. The court issued an order not to go ahead with the construction work. However, members of one community violated the order and built the temple. This led to the clash.

A peace meeting has been held and the situation at Kolagallu is under control, according to Ranjith Kumar Bandaru, Superintendent of Police, Ballari.

Irate Varuna villagers gherao Yathindra

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Mysuru

FORMER MLA and Chief Minister Siddaramaiah's son Yathindra Siddaramaiah was gheraoed by villagers during his campaign for Sunil Bose, Congress candidate for Chamarajanagar Lok Sabha seat, on Sunday.

Hundreds of people from three villages of Siddaramaiah's home constituency Varuna, who are on a protest against the management of Bannari Amman sugar factory in support of their demands, accused Yathindra of taking advantage of their protest for political gains when he met them after campaigning at Mallupura village in Nanjangud taluk.

Tension prevailed there for some time when the protesters confronted Yathindra. "You are here just because of the LS elections. Otherwise, you wouldn't have met us," they told Yathindra. **P4**

Saudi push for Kashmir talks between India and Pakistan

YESHI SELI @ New Delhi

THE issue of Kashmir figured in the talks between visiting Pakistan Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif and his Saudi Arabian counterpart **Prince Mohammad bin Salman** in Makkah.

"The two leaders stressed the importance of dialogue between India and Pakistan to resolve the outstanding issues between the two nations, especially for the Jammu and Kashmir dispute to ensure peace and stability in the region," their joint statement released on Monday read after the bilateral talks a day earlier.

The two leaders also discussed the situation in Gaza and supported the peace process in accordance with the resolutions of UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly and the Arab Peace Initiative "for the establishment of an independent Palestinian state with East Jerusalem as its capital".

New Delhi's long-held position is that Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and there is no question of any third party role.

Diplomatic ties between India and Pakistan remain downgraded ever since 2019 after Article 370 that gave J&K special powers was read down. However, Prime Minister Narendra Modi wished his newly elected Pakistani counterpart after the latter assumed power.

Though things haven't improved on the ground yet, the business community in Pakistan is pressing for resumption of cross-border trade with India. But New Delhi has always maintained that ties with Islamabad can improve only if it stop its terror factory.

Recently, Pakistan denounced defence minister Rajnath Singh's comment in a televised interview where he said India would track down and liquidate terrorists and even if they manage to cross the border.

These comments came after Pakistan cited a *Guardian* report alleging that India had killed 20 people in Pakistan since 2020 as part of a broader plan to target terrorists residing in foreign soil.

चुनाव का पर्व DESH KA GARV

DISTRICT ELECTION OFFICER, BENGALURU DISTRICT & CHIEF COMMISSIONER, BBMP

N.R. Square, Bengaluru - 560 002.

GENERAL ELECTION TO LOK SABHA - 2024

Subject: Submission of explanation to Notice issued asking for reasons for non-attendance to training by officers/personnel assigned for election duties on 07.04.2024-reg.
and
Warning that strict action will be taken against additional personnel who do not attend the training.

Polling Personnel Deployment:

Date of 1st level Election Training (for absentees and additional personnel)	10th April 2024 at 9.30 AM
Training Venue for PROs	Government Pre University College,18th Cross, Malleswaram, Bengaluru-560012.
Training Venue for APROs	Smt. V.H.D. Central Institute of Home Science, Sheshadri Road, Bengaluru-560 001.
Date of 2nd level Election Training	Will be informed later
Date of Mustering	25th April 2024 at 9.30 AM
Date of Poll	26th April 2024

FINAL CAUTION

Notice has been issued as per RP Act 1951 asking for reasons to those who have not attended the training held on **07.04.2024.** Explanation to be given in person at your assigned training centres.

Personnel assigned for election duties should compulsorily attend on the date and time at the centres for training, mustering and poll duty.

Further, failure by any personnel to attend, Immediate FIR will be booked u/s 134 of RP Act 1951 against the defaulting official and appropriate legal action will be taken and disciplinary action will be initiated under relevant service rules and penal code.

A Nodal Officer has been appointed from each office for the purpose of polling personnel deployment. The Nodal Officer shall serve the election duty orders on their staff and issue Notice asking for reasons for non-attendance and take responsibility to ensure their attendance at the training and poll duty. Any negligence in performing the above said duties will attract cognizable penal action u/s 134 of RP Act against the Nodal Officer.

Polling personnel can download Presiding Officer Handbook from **https://eci.gov.in**

District Election Officer, Bengaluru District & Chief Commissioner, BBMP, Bengaluru